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Letter dated 16 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you in response to the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations in the context of the discussion following the briefing on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq delivered at the 7804th meeting of the Security Council, on 9 November 2016 (S/PV.7804), in which he levelled unsubstantiated accusations against Turkey.

It has not been long since I reacted to the letter dated 14 October 2016 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/870, annex), which contained similar allegations. Yet, on 9 November 2016 the Permanent Representative of Iraq took an even more aggressive tone against Turkey.

It is unfortunate that Iraq has been developing a practice of misusing every opportunity in the Security Council to settle its bilateral differences with Turkey. Since December 2015, when the Security Council discussed the military training activities of Turkey in Bashiqa for the first time, the perspectives of both Iraq and Turkey on the camp have been thoroughly considered.

Currently, the consultations regarding the most efficient way to transition the Bashiqa camp into a Global Coalition against Daesh military facility are under way. Following four rounds of talks between the two countries, Turkey is now working on the written counter-proposal of Iraq.

Iraq faces existential challenges, the most important and pressing of which is the ongoing Mosul operation. At this critical juncture, nothing can be more detrimental to the interests of Iraq than deflecting the international community's focus from this operation.

Given the gravity of the accusations levelled by the Permanent Representative of Iraq during the Security Council briefing, I have an obligation to formally renounce those false claims and register the views of Turkey on the matter.

Daesh poses a direct threat to the national security of Turkey. As such, Turkey has been effectively fighting against this terrorist organization both individually and as part of the Global Coalition.

I also deem it necessary to shed some light on the past developments that led to the rise of Daesh in Iraq. The current predicament in Iraq has been primarily the

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result of its own wrongdoing. Policies of sectarian and ethnic exclusion, the marginalization of certain groups and the concentration of power at the central Government level at the expense of the federal system envisaged in the Constitution have created conditions upon which Daesh has capitalized.

These policies have inflicted severe damage chiefly upon the armed forces of Iraq. The Iraqi army showed no effort to defend Mosul and disappeared into thin air when Daesh entered the city in June 2014. Consequently, Daesh occupied one third of Iraq without resistance, and, two years on, it still controls a large part of Mosul. In this two-year period, Daesh has terrorized the people of Iraq and launched terrorist attacks to the detriment of regional and international security.

Unfortunately, the Government of Iraq does not exercise its sovereignty over some parts of Iraq. In these places, multiple terrorist organizations operate, and they are major destabilizers in the region and beyond. Terrorist organizations like Daesh and PKK are both present in some parts of Iraq and pose direct national security threats to Turkey.

No other country in the region has suffered more than Turkey from the lack of authority in the northern part of Iraq. The armed terrorist groups that are operating freely in Iraq and infiltrating into Turkish territory to carry out attacks continue to threaten the security of Turkey and the safety and well-being of the Turkish people.

Therefore, we recognize the importance of and support to the territorial integrity and political unity of Iraq. We are convinced that only by restoring its full authority and sovereignty over its entire territory can Iraq stop the security threats to its territory, the people of Iraq and its neighbours.

Turkey is a determined member of the Global Coalition against Daesh. We are also extending robust and wide-ranging bilateral assistance, including humanitarian relief, to the Government of Iraq, the KRG and local groups to consolidate their capacities in the ongoing fight against Daesh and other terrorist organizations.

Turkey, where more than 300,000 Iraqi citizens have taken refuge since the Daesh occupation in 2014, remains particularly concerned about the possibility of another major humanitarian crisis in northern Iraq. Since the start of the Mosul operation, we have been providing humanitarian relief to the Iraqis.

Thus, the unfounded claims expressed by the Permanent Representative of Iraq neither reflect the true nature of the approach of Turkey to Iraq nor do they bode well for the spirit of long-standing friendship between Turkey and Iraq.

I would like to reiterate our conviction that dialogue and diplomacy is the only option to address the bilateral issues between Turkey and Iraq.

Turkey remains committed to pursuing this path and is equally determined to take all measures necessary for its self-defence available under international law and principles.

I would appreciate if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative